

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

AWARDS HANDBOOK

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This handbook is available on the NIH Awards website, located on the OHRM Home Page:

NIH Home Page

Institutes, Centers, and Divisions

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Information for Employees

Awards

You will need the Adobe Acrobat Reader software to access the Handbook. The link to download the free software is available on the Awards Home Page.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

AWARDS HANDBOOK

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GENERAL HONOR AWARD INFORMATION

Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook provides guidance for preparation and submission of nominations for the NIH Director's Award, the HHS Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service, and the Commissioned Officers Awards Program. The entire handbook may be copied and distributed to staff responsible for submitting nominations. In addition, each section may be removed and individually copied for distribution to staff.

General Information about Award Nominations

Nominations for both the DHHS and the NIH honor awards must be submitted to the Division of IC Consulting (DICC), Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM), by the specified dates for each type of award. CO award nominations are submitted to the Division of Senior Systems (DSS), OHRM. ICs should plan their internal review and nomination process to allow enough time for timely submission. ICs will be informed/reminded each year.

Nominations for the NIH Director's Award and the HHS Secretary's Award are submitted on-line via the OHRM home page on the Internet, and all information becomes part of the awards database. All requested information must be provided. Nominations for CO awards are submitted using the appropriate form and format in hard copy. This document provides general information on awards, specific information about each award, and detailed instructions for preparing and submitting nominations. Questions may also be addressed to the NIH Awards Coordinator in the Division of IC Consulting, OHRM.

Helpful Information

- Be certain that each nomination is carefully proofread. Information entered via the on-line awards submission system for NIH award becomes part of the awards database and is used as submitted for the award notification letter, the plaque, and the program book. Information submitted for the HHS Award is printed in the HHS format using the information exactly as entered. The NIH Awards Coordinator **does not** make corrections or retype the submissions.
- Rank NIH and HHS nominations in priority order (regardless of category for the NIH award) and submit the ranking E-mail message to the NIH Awards Coordinator in, DICC, OHRM, prior to the deadlines. All nominations entered in the system must be listed in this E-mail message.
- All citations must fit in the space provided on the entry screens, approximately 25 words.
- Narratives must clearly state and document the specific details of the accomplishment(s). In addition, language describing scientific or technical accomplishments should be understandable by a diverse audience. Avoid technical jargon.
- Examples of accomplishments and how to write the narrative justifications are included in each section.

Detailed information for each type of award is presented in the following sections:

- The NIH Director's Award
- The HHS Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service
- The Commissioned Officers Awards Program

The NIH Awards Committee

The permanent members of the NIH Awards Committee are the incumbents in the following positions:

- Deputy Director, NIH
- Deputy Director for Management
- Deputy Director, Intramural Research
- Deputy Director, Extramural Research
- Director, Office of Human Resource Management
- Director, Office of Equal Opportunity

In addition, there are 3 temporary members who change each year:

- 2 IC Directors
- 1 OD staff

The NIH Awards Committee will review the nominations on-line, exactly as they have been entered by the IC Awards Coordinators. Each member scores the nominations and an average score is calculated for each nomination. The Committee then recommends award recipients to the Director, NIH, who makes the final decision.

The CO Awards Board

The CO Awards Board is composed of seven officers from various PHS Agencies from several professional categories. The Board's action on each nomination is based on the information in the nomination and occasionally on a review of prior award nominations in the official personnel file.

The Board reviews and discusses each nomination it receives. Each Board member votes a score (from 0 to 10) and the average is calculated. Nominations are tabulated according to decreasing score and transmitted to the Surgeon General. A summary of major comments is recorded by the Board's Executive Secretary. Occasionally the Board makes a formal additional comment.

THE NIH DIRECTOR'S AWARD

Purpose

The purpose of the NIH Director's Award is to recognize employees who exhibited superior performance or special efforts significantly beyond their regular duty requirements, but directly related to fulfilling the NIH mission.

Overview of the Nomination and Review Process

Nominations for the NIH Director's Award are submitted for a specific category according to the nature of the act, service, or work performance. Nominations are submitted on-line, via the NIH Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM) web site. It is the responsibility of the ICs to complete their internal nomination and review procedures, and the IC Director must approve the nominations prior to entry into this on-line system. Each IC Award Coordinator, or other authorized person, has an account and password to access the nomination screen. It is available on the Awards section of the OHRM Home Page. Generally, the process is as follows:

Submission Deadline: The E-mail message described below must be received by the NIH Awards Coordinator in OHRM/DICC, and all nominations must be submitted on-line via the OHRM Home Page no later than c.o.b. of the date indicated in the Call for Nominations, usually February 15th each year (or the first regular work day immediately following February 15th if the 15th is a weekend or holiday).

1. ICs conduct and complete their own internal nomination and review process to allow sufficient time for actual nominations to be entered via the on-line nomination system on the NIH Awards web site prior to the deadline date.
2. By the deadline date, the IC Awards Coordinators submit via E-mail their IC Director's list of nominees ranked in priority order (highest priority nomination listed first), regardless of the category. This message must be received before any nominations are processed. The message should be sent to: Lewisla@od.nih.gov and GrayM@od.nih.gov, with a cc: to your IC Director. Ms. Lewis and Ms. Gray are located in the Division of IC Consulting, OHRM.
3. By the deadline date, the IC Awards Coordinators submit all IC nominations via the awards nomination page on the OHRM home page. See specific instructions for entering the nominations in the next major section of this document. It is suggested that you print each nomination and check it carefully for typing errors, especially the employee's name, degrees, and the citation. For the NIH Director's Award, these items will be used in the congratulatory letter from the NIH Director, the program book, and on the plaque -- exactly as you type them.

Nominations may be entered earlier than the due date. If you find that there is an error in a nomination, you may go back and edit that nomination prior to the deadline. The entry screen will be locked the morning after the deadline. If you find an error after the deadline, call the NIH Awards Coordinator in DICC, who can tell you how to make your corrections.

4. After submission by the ICs, the NIH Awards Committee will review each nomination, using the on-line system. No "hard copies" will be distributed to the Committee.
5. Decisions will be communicated to each IC Awards Coordinator via a memo with the following items attached: list of recipients; congratulatory letter from the Director, NIH, for each recipient; and memo outlining instructions for attendance at the Awards Ceremony for each recipient. The purpose of sending all information to the IC Awards Coordinator is to provide the names of the recipients first

to the primary IC awards contact and the IC Directors. IC Directors may wish to add their own letter, once notified by their Awards Coordinators.

6. The NIH Director presents the awards to employees at the NIH Annual Awards Ceremony, usually held in June. Under exceptional circumstances, the Award may be given to persons other than currently appointed NIH personnel.

NIH Contact

The NIH Awards Coordinator is located in the Division of IC Consulting (DICC) in the Office of Human Resource Management. Questions or problems should be addressed to the NIH Awards Coordinator.

Timeframe Covered by the Award

Activities which are the basis for a nomination should take place during the previous calendar year, or any portion of the previous calendar year.

Nature and Presentation of the Award

The Award is an engraved plaque, presented by the Director, NIH, at the annual NIH Awards Ceremony. The ceremony is usually held in June.

Categories, Eligibility, and Criteria for Nominations

There are three employee categories for the NIH Director's Award, each with specific eligibility and nomination criteria, as outlined below.

Category A - Scientific/Medical

Eligibility: All NIH employees or group of employees in the scientific/medical professions.

Criteria:

1. Unusual display of leadership which promoted the advancement of the understanding or application of scientific phenomena, processes, or problems.
2. Unusual achievement in the application of scientific principles and methods to improve the efficiency or extend the benefits of the NIH.
3. Discovery or invention of a new principle, process, or device or a scientific nature that resulted in substantial benefits.
4. Unusual competence, compassion, or heroism in an emergency situation at the NIH.
5. Sustained and excellent performance in carrying out a difficult task.
6. Outstanding contribution to a special committee or task force dealing with NIH-wide policies, procedures, or operations.
7. Skill and leadership in science.

Category B - Technical/Clerical/Support

Eligibility: All NIH employees or groups of employees in grades GS-1 through GS-9, and Wage Grade equivalent.

Criteria:

1. Outstanding efforts in applying technical or clerical support skills to accomplish NIH mission.
2. Exceptional initiative in carrying out activities to improve NIH program operations or to benefit the NIH environment.
3. Unusual competence, compassion, or heroism in an emergency situation at NIH.
4. Sustained and excellent performance in carrying out a difficult task.

Category C - Administrative

Eligibility: All NIH employees or group of employees not covered by Categories A nor Category B.

Criteria:

1. Exceptional initiative or leadership in carrying out activities to improve NIH program operations or to benefit the NIH environment.
2. Development and improvement of methods, procedures, or equipment that resulted in substantial benefits to the NIH or Government.
3. Unusual competence, compassion, or heroism in an emergency situation at NIH.
4. Sustained and excellent performance in carrying out a difficult task.
5. Outstanding contribution to a special committee or task force dealing with NIH-wide policies, procedures, or operations.
6. Notable competence and resourcefulness in improving the administrative management of the NIH.
7. Skill and leadership in administration.

Citation Guidelines

The citation will be engraved on the plaque exactly as submitted. Total number of characters is 120, or 3 lines of 40 characters each. Start each citation with "For ..." or "In recognition of ..." Depending on your wording, 120 characters may not fit if long words must be moved to the next line. You may wish to use your word processor and set margins to allow a 40 character length line to get a general idea of how the lines will fit on the plaque, or alter the wording for a better fit.

Justification Guidelines

The narrative justification should focus on the employee's contributions, and the significance of and how the employee's actions have compared to or exceeded what is expected of an employee of this grade and experience. Routine responsibilities and career progression should be included only to establish the context for the actions cited. The cited actions, their impact and significance are important and should be stated clearly, emphasizing the period covered in the nomination. If the employee received an honor award(s) in the period cited or for earlier actions that may seem similar or overlapping with those in the current nomination, clarify the basis for the prior award(s) and its relevance or non-relevance to the present nomination. If an award is based in part on achievements which were the basis for a prior award, the new nomination must clearly delineate how the current accomplishment has advanced beyond the previous one(s).

When preparing the justification, remember that reviewing officials at NIH must base their decisions on the written material alone. Therefore, carefully review the award criteria and then focus the written narrative on the nominee's accomplishments as they related to the criteria. Give specific examples. Some points to consider, if applicable:

- extent to which the field of health and/or biomedical research has been strengthened or improved by the particular superior service or achievement;
- extent to which knowledge and sound principles have been applied, especially in relation to a variety of work areas, workloads, etc.;
- extent to which “ideas,” “concepts,” etc, represent originality, creativeness, and/or initiative;
- extent to which service, technical and clerical support skills were applied to accomplish the NIH mission;
- extent to which unusual ability has been exercised in solving difficult problems;
- extent to which competence and resourcefulness improved the scientific or administrative management of the NIH; or
- degree of demonstrated skill and leadership in administration and science.

When writing the justification, follow these guidelines:

- Write in a specific and objective manner, answering the following questions:
 - What did the employee do to warrant recognition?
 - What is the employee's scope of responsibility relative to his/her grade?
 - What were the outcomes (impacts) of the employee's accomplishments on the program and NIH in general? What was scope of the outcome versus the employee's scope in his/her job?
 - How did this accomplishment bring honor upon the employee and the NIH?
- Avoid use of glowing adjectives or global phrases unrelated to the accomplishment; allow the accomplishment to speak for itself.
- Be consistent between the proposed citation and the narrative.
- Avoid overly technical language. Do not assume the reviewers will be familiar with technical terms or jargon. If the use of technical terms is required, the narrative should contain clarifying statements that are understandable to a multi-disciplinary Committee.
- Write the narrative for the highest level of reviewing authority. Keep it simple, but comprehensive. A neutral party should be able to read the narrative and based on it alone, understand the reason for the proposed award and make an informed decision.

Nomination Process for the NIH Director's Award

Nominations are submitted electronically via the OHRM Awards web site. Follow the instructions below for entry. Instructions contain location of the web site (URL), and specific criteria for each field on the nomination entry screen.

1. Submit the E-mail message listing the nominees in priority order to the NIH Awards Coordinator in OHRM/DICC, LaVonne Lewis.
2. Locate the Awards web site: At the **NIH Home Page**, choose:
Institutes
Office of the Director

**Office of Human Resource Management
Information for Employees
Awards**

On the **Awards** page, select **Nominate NIH Director's Award** to access the nomination site. Only registered IC Awards Coordinators may submit nominations. The IC process for nomination, review, and approval must be completed before nominations are entered via the web site. On the first screen, choose "Coordinator." On the next screen, enter the required ID and password, and click once on the "Login" button. If you type any information incorrectly or your name and/or password do not match the list of registered users, you cannot gain access to the nomination system. If you have problems, contact the NIH Awards Coordinator.

Note the 'bread trail' at the top of the screen to allow you to move back to earlier levels in the menu structure. You can click once on any colored menu title to go directly back to that menu.

3. The next screen is the **IC Awards Coordinators' Menu**. Each option is described below.

! New Individual Nomination

This option allows you to enter an individual nomination. **Please double check the spelling of the employee's name and his or her credentials. Information will not be verified or corrected by the NIH Awards Coordinator. Information is used directly from the database, as entered by the ICs. Any incorrect information will be engraved on the recipient's plaque, printed in the award program book, and used in the congratulatory letters from the NIH Director.** Complete each field as described below. **Please do not use the RETURN key at anytime, it WILL mess up your entry and you may need to re-enter it again. Use your mouse or the tab key at all times to move from field to field.**

Last Name, First Name, MI	Self-explanatory. VERIFY THE SPELLING. Use Lead Capital Letters.
Degree(s)	Enter the degree(s) the employee normally uses, such as PhD, MD, MPH, DrPH. <u>Omit</u> periods between the initials. This will be used on the plaque. Multiple degrees are permissible. VERIFY THE DEGREES.
Salutation	Press <Enter> or click on the down-arrow at the right end of the blank to see the pop-up list, or type in Dr, Mr, or Ms. The salutation will be used in the congratulatory letter to the employee.
Title	Enter the nominee's official title, such as Secretary, Laboratory Technician, or Health Scientist Administrator, etc.
Office	Use the 2 lines to enter the nominee's organizational location, and address, for example, Division of IC Consulting, OHRM, 31/1C39 Bethesda, MD 20892-2272 Tab to move to the next line.
IC	Enter the acronym for your IC. Alternatively, you may press <Enter> to see the list of ICs, highlight your IC and then press <Enter> again.

Category	<p>Category of employee's position, i.e., Scientific/Medical, Administrative, or Technical/Clerical/Support. Press <Enter> or click on the down-arrow to see the pop-up menu or type the single letter to indicate category, as follows:</p> <p>S Scientific/Medical A Administrative T Technical/Clerical/Support</p>
IC Ranking	Enter the rank number of this employee in the overall ranking list determined by the IC Director, and as was indicated on the submission/ranking E-mail message to the NIH Awards Coordinator.
Total IC Nominations	Enter the total number of IC nominations. NOTE: Each group award counts as <u>one</u> nomination, despite how many people may be part of the group.
Previous Awards	<p>Place a check in the box to indicate whether the employee has received, within the last 5 years, any awards in the following three categories:</p> <p>1) NIH, PHS or DHHS; 2) IC Honor Award; or 3) Outside Awards. This information is NOT required for individual members of Group Awards.</p>
Nominator	Enter the name of the person who nominated this employee.
Nominator Relationship	Enter the relationship of the nominator to the nominee, i.e., Supervisor, Colleague, Team Member, etc.
Nominator IC	Enter the acronym for the nominator's IC, not necessarily the same as the nominee's IC.
Citation	<p>Type in the citation. Start each citation with: "For ..." or "In recognition of ..." The boxes are designed to approximate the lines on the plaque. Type each line and press Tab to move to the next line. Total number of characters is limited to 120. Depending on your wording, 120 characters may not fit if long words must move to the next line. Adjust the citation to fit the space.</p> <p>NOTE: This citation will be engraved on the plaque exactly as you type it here. The NIH Awards Coordinator will <u>not</u> retype it or make any corrections. You may wish to use your word processor margins to approximate the size to determine wording, and then cut and paste the text from your word processor.</p>
Justification	<p>Copy and paste the justification from your word processor or type it in. The box holds the equivalent of one page of single spaced text, 1 inch margins, 12 characters per inch (total of 4212 characters). It is suggested that you type this in your word processor, verify size, font, spelling, grammar, etc., and then cut and paste it into this field. The Awards Committee will review this exactly as you type it here. The NIH Awards Coordinator will <u>not</u> retype it or make any corrections.</p>

- P After entering all the information, press the **"Accept"** button at the bottom to submit the nomination. Accepting a nomination takes you to the next screen to verify what you typed and save the nomination. Scroll down and review all the information. If it is all accurate, scroll

back to the top of the screen and click on **Save Nomination**. The next screen allows you to enter additional individual nominations or return to the Coordinator's main menu. You may go back and edit the nomination at any time prior to the deadline, at which time the submission screen will be locked.

! New Group Nomination

This option allows you to enter a new group nomination. A group nomination is counted as one nomination for purposes of indicating the total number of nominations from your IC. Enter the appropriate information requested. **Please double check the spelling of the employees' name and their credentials. Information will not be verified or corrected by the NIH Awards Coordinator. Information is used directly from the database, as entered by the ICs. Any incorrect information will be engraved on the recipient's plaque, printed in the award program book, and used in the congratulatory letters from the NIH Director.** Complete each field as described below.

P On the first screen, enter the following information about the Group.

Group Name	Enter the name of the Group, not the individuals. Use a name which incor-porates your IC Acronym and other identifying information. Keep the name short, for example, "OHRM Award Team."
IC	Enter the acronym for your IC. Alternatively, you may press <Enter> or click on the down-arrow to see the list of ICs, highlight your IC and then press <Enter> again.
IC Ranking	Enter the rank number of this employee in the overall ranking list determined by the IC Director, and indicated on the submission/ranking E-mail message to the NIH Awards Coordinator.
Total IC Nominations	Enter the total number of IC nominations. NOTE: Each group award counts as <u>one</u> nomination, despite how many people may be part of the group.
Category	<p>Category of employee's position, i.e., Scientific/Medical, Administrative, or Technical/Clerical/Support. Press <Enter> to see the pop-up menu or type the single letter to indicate category, as follows:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">S Scientific/Medical A Administrative T Technical/Clerical/Support</p>
Citation	<p>Type in the citation. Start each citation with: "For ..." or "In recognition of ...". The box is designed to approximate the lines on the plaque. Type each line and press Tab to move to the next line. Total number of characters is limited to 120. Depending on your wording, 120 characters may not fit if long words must move to the next line. Adjust the citation to fit the space.</p> <p>NOTE: This citation will be engraved on the plaque exactly as you type it here. The NIH Awards Coordinator will <u>not</u> retype it or make any corrections. You may wish to use your word processor to approximate the size to determine wording, and then cut and paste the text from your word processor.</p>
Justification	<p>Copy and paste the justification from your word processor or type it in. The box holds the equivalent of one page of single spaced text, 1 inch margins, 12 characters per inch (total of 4212 characters). It is suggested that you type this in your word processor, verify size, font, spelling, grammar, etc., and then cut and paste it into this field. The Awards Committee will review this exactly as you type it here. The NIH Awards Coordinator will <u>not</u> retype it or make any corrections.</p>

P The next screen allows you to Save, Edit, or Cancel the nomination. Click on your choice.

Save takes you to the screen to add the individual members of the group.

Edit allows you to revise the group information you just entered.

Cancel rejects the nomination and returns you to the Coordinator menu.

- P After verifying that the group information you entered is correct and clicking on **Save**, you see the Award Group Member Input Form, where you add the individual members of the group. Click on **Add Group Member** and complete the fields for each member:

Last Name, First Name, MI	Self-explanatory. VERIFY THE SPELLING. Use Lead Capital Letters.
Degree(s)	Enter the degree(s) the employee normally uses, such as PhD, MD, MPH, DrPH. <u>Omit</u> periods between the initials. This will be used on the plaque. Multiple degrees are permissible. VERIFY THE DEGREES.
Salutation	Press <Enter> to see the pop-up list or type in Dr, Mr, or Ms. The salutation will be used in the congratulatory letter to the employee.

- P Enter the information about the first group member and choose one of the following options:
Accept Input adds the name to the database and returns you to the above screen to add more group members.
Reset clears the information from the fields.
Cancel Update clears the information and exits you to the Award Group Member Input Form.

- P On the Award Group Member Input Form screen, choose **Add** or **Exit** as appropriate. Exit returns you to the Coordinator main menu.

! View/Edit Nominations

Choose this option to review or edit a nomination which you have already entered via the New Individual or New Group menus.

- P Indicate whether you wish to review individual or group nominations and you will see a list of your nominations.
- P Click on the name of the nomination you wish to view. See the instructions on the screen. The entry screen is the same one used for the original nomination. If you wish to print the nomination, use the "Print" option in your browser (i.e, Netscape or other browser).
- P When you are finished reviewing your nominations, click on "main menu" in the 'bread trail' at the top of your screen to return to the Award System Main Menu.

You may now close or minimize the system. At the main menu level, you must log in again if you wish to re-enter the Awards system.

HHS SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Purpose

The purpose of the HHS Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service is to recognize service that significantly advances the Department's mission and goals. It will reinforce the growing importance of achievement through teams. It recognizes high achievers who demonstrate teamwork and partnerships, as well as individuals whose accomplishments can be attributed directly to their personal skills and abilities.

Overview of the Nomination and Review Process

Nominations for the HHS Secretary's Award are submitted on-line, via the NIH Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM) Home Page. It is the responsibility of the IC to complete their internal nomination and review procedures, and the IC Director to approve the nominations prior to entry into this on-line system. Each IC Awards Coordinator, or other authorized person, has an account and password to access the nomination screen. This document provides information on the Award, the criteria for nomination, guidelines for preparation of the justification narrative, and detailed instructions for submission of nominations. The document is available on the Awards section on the NIH Home Page. Generally, the process is as follows:

Submission Deadline: The E-mail message described below must be received by the NIH Awards Coordinator in OHRM/DICC, and all nominations must be submitted on-line via the OHRM Home Page no later than c.o.b. of the date indicated in the Call for Nominations memo, usually January 5th each year (or the first regular work day immediately following January 5th if the 5th is a weekend or holiday).

1. ICs conduct and complete their own internal process for nomination and review so that the process is completed in time for actual nominations to be entered into the on-line nomination system on the NIH Awards web site prior to the deadline date.
2. By the deadline date, the IC Awards Coordinators submit a memo via E-mail or hard copy listing the nominees in priority order (highest priority nomination listed first), regardless of the category. This E-mail must be received before any nominations are processed. Send the memo to the NIH Awards Coordinator, OHRM/ DICC: LaVonne Lewis.
3. By the deadline date, the IC Awards Coordinators submit all IC nominations via the OHRM nomination page on the NIH Awards home page. See specific instructions for entering the nominations and the location of the Awards web site in the section of this manual entitled "Submitting HHS Award Nominations" (available on the Awards web site). It is suggested that you print each nomination and check it carefully for typing errors, especially the employee's name, degrees, and the citation. These items will be used on the nomination submitted to HHS exactly as you type them.

Nominations may be entered earlier than the due date. If you find that there is an error in a nomination or you wish to strengthen your justification, you may go back and edit that nomination prior to the deadline. See the section entitled "Other Options of the Awards System" for assistance with the edit process. The entry screen will be locked the morning after the deadline. If you find an error after the deadline, call the NIH Awards Coordinator in DICC, who can tell you how to make your corrections.

4. After submission by the ICs, the NIH Awards Committee will review each nomination, using the on-line system. No "hard copies" will be distributed.
5. Decisions on which nominations are being forwarded to HHS will be communicated to each IC Awards Coordinator with a memo from the Director, Division of IC Consulting.

NIH Contact

The NIH Awards Coordinator is located in the Division of IC Consulting (DICC) in the Office of Human Resource Management. Questions or problems should be addressed to the NIH Awards Coordinator.

Timeframe Covered by the Award

Activities which are the basis for a nomination should take place during the previous calendar year, or any portion of the previous calendar year.

Nature and Presentation of the Award

The Award is an engraved obelisk, presented by the Secretary, HHS, at the annual HHS Awards Ceremony. The ceremony is usually held in May.

Eligibility

All DHHS employees are eligible for recognition whether for team or individual achievements, regardless of position, grade or status. See the sample accomplishments in the next section for individual or team accomplishments which would qualify for consideration. The list is illustrative, not exhaustive. Other accomplishments are also appropriate for nomination.

Criteria for Nomination

The most critical feature of the nomination is to set forth the achievements which make the team or individual worthy of recognition by the Secretary. Nominations should highlight displays of leadership, skill, ability, and customer service performed in such a manner that the team and/or employee performed significantly above those with similar duties, and that the results of these efforts were distinctly beneficial to the Department. In all cases, performance should clearly exceed expectations.

While the nominations of individuals will be accepted, the award encourages the recognition of teamwork. Teams may consist of employees from the same organization or from a number of different organizations. Although specific categories have not been prescribed, it is expected that a diverse pool of employees from all organizational levels will be nominated. Managers and supervisors should broadly distribute the nomination guidelines and should encourage and accept nominations from peers, team members, team leaders, supervisors, and internal customers.

Examples of accomplishments which advance the mission and goals of the DHHS include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A re-engineered work process which provides better customer service and positive performance outcomes.

- Major improvement to the operation of an HHS office or program by integrating processes.
- Active involvement in a community effort which successfully allows persons with disabilities and older Americans to remain independent, or one which discourages children from adopting high-risk behaviors.
- An innovative way to deliver an HHS program to more customers at no increase in cost.
- A new strategy for reducing risk-taking behaviors and promoting healthy life styles.
- A self directed team which developed ways to do work better at no additional cost or at less cost.
- An HHS program made more accessible to customers.
- A newly developed protocol which has resulted in timely and effective methods, techniques, processes or treatments.
- A strengthened partnership between HHS and its customers.
- A work place with noticeable improvements in employee morale, safety, and/or health.
- Voluntary risk of personal safety and demonstration of courage which directly benefit HHS or the community at large.

Nomination Process

Nominations are submitted electronically via the OHRM Awards web site. Follow the instructions below for entry. Instructions contain location of the web site (URL), and specific criteria for each field on the nomination entry screen.

1. Locate the Awards web site: At the NIH Home Page, choose:

Institutes

Office of the Director

Office of Human Resource Management

Information for Employees

Awards

On the **Awards** page, select **HHS Secretary's Award, Nominate** to access the nomination site. Only registered IC Awards Coordinators may submit nominations. The IC process for nomination, review, and approval must be completed before nominations are entered via the web site. On the first screen, choose "Coordinator." On the next screen, enter the required ID and password, and click once on the "Login" button. If you type any information incorrectly or your name and/or password do not match the list of registered users, you cannot gain access to the nomination system. If you have problems, contact the NIH Awards Coordinator.

2. The next screen is the **IC Awards Coordinators' menu**. Each option is described in detail in the following sections.

- **New Individual Nomination**

This option allows you to enter an individual nomination. Enter the appropriate information requested. **Please double check the spelling of the employee's name and his or her credentials. Information will not be verified or corrected by the NIH Awards Coordinator. Any incorrect information you enter will be forwarded as submitted.** Complete each field as described below. The justification and citation for a group award are entered once, but each name is entered individually so appropriate information is available for the congratulatory letters.

Last Name, First Name, MI Self-explanatory. Verify the spelling. Use Lead Capital letters for names.

Degree(s)	Enter the degree(s) the employee normally uses, such as PhD, MD, MPH, DrPH. <u>Omit</u> periods between the initials. This will be used on the plaque. Multiple degrees are permissible. VERIFY THE DEGREES.
Salutation	Press <Enter> to see the pop-up list or type in Dr, Mr, or Ms. The salutation will be used in the congratulatory letter to the employee.
Position/Title	Enter the nominee's official working title, such as Secretary, Procurement Analyst, Health Scientist Administrator, Chemist, Division Director, etc.
Address	Use the 4 lines to enter the nominee's organizational location and mailing address, i.e., Division of IC Consulting, OHRM 31 Center Drive, MSC-2272 Bethesda, MD 20892-2272 Tab to move to the next line. (It is not necessary to fill each line.)
IC	Enter the acronym for your IC. Alternatively, you may press <Enter> to see the list of ICs, highlight your IC and then press <Enter> again.
IC Ranking	Enter the rank of this employee in the overall ranking list determined by the IC Director, and indicated on the submission/ranking E-mail message to the NIH Awards Coordinator.
Total IC Nominations	Enter the total number of IC nominations. NOTE: Each group award counts as <u>one</u> nomination, despite how many people may be part of the group.
Previous Awards	Place a check in the box to indicate whether the employee has received, within the last 5 years, any awards in the following three categories: 1) NIH, PHS or DHHS; 2) IC Honor Award; or 3) Outside Awards. This information is NOT required for individual members of Group Awards.
Nominator	Enter the name of the person who nominated this employee. At NIH, this is usually the IC Director.
Nominator Relationship	Enter the relationship of the nominator to the nominee. At NIH, this is usually the IC Director.
Nominator IC	Enter the acronym for the nominator's IC, not necessarily the same as the nominee's IC.
Citation	Type in the citation. Start each citation with: "For ..." or "In recognition of ..." The box is designed to approximate the lines on the plaque. Type each line and press Tab to move to the next line. Total number of characters is limited to 120. Depending on your wording, 120 characters may not fit if long words must be moved to the next line. Adjust the citation to fit. NOTE: The NIH Awards Coordinator will <u>not</u> retype the citation or make any corrections. You may wish to use your word processor margins to approximate the size to determine wording, and then cut and paste the text from your word processor.

Justification Copy and paste the justification from your word processor or type it in. The box holds less than one page of single spaced text, 1" margins on top and both sides, 3" bottom margin, 12 characters per inch (use 12 pitch courier) (approximately 3300 characters). It is suggested that you type this in your word processor, verify size, font, spelling, grammar, etc., and then cut and paste it into this field. If it is too long, the extra text will be omitted when the final form is printed. The NIH Awards Coordinator will not edit it. The Awards Committee will review this **exactly as you type it here**.

Check the most recent on-line copy of the *Handbook* for assistance.

- P After entering all the information, press the "**Accept**" button at the bottom to submit the nomination. You may go back and edit the nomination at any time prior to the deadline, at which time the submission screen will be locked.
- P Submitting a nomination takes you to the next screen to verify what you typed and save the nomination. Scroll down and review all the information. If it is all accurate, scroll back to the top of the screen and click on **Save Nomination**. The next screen allows you to enter additional individual nominations or return to the Coordinator's main menu.

! New Group Nomination

Group nominations consist of two parts: the Group information, and the names of the members. A group nomination is counted as one nomination for purposes of indicating the total number of nominations from your IC. The nomination screen is shown below. Enter the appropriate information requested. **Please double check the spelling of the employee's name and his or her credentials. Information will not be verified or corrected by the NIH Awards Coordinator. Any incorrect information you enter will be forwarded as submitted.** Complete each field as described below. The justification and citation for a group award are entered once, but each name is entered individually so appropriate information is available for the congratulatory letters.

- P On the first screen, enter the following information about the Group.

Group Name	Enter the name of the Group, not the individuals. Use a name which incorporates your IC Acronym and other identifying information. Keep the name short, for example, "OHRM Award Team."
IC	Enter the acronym for your IC. Alternatively, you may press <Enter> to see the list of ICs, highlight your IC and then press <Enter> again.
IC Ranking	Enter the rank of this employee in the overall ranking list determined by the IC Director, and indicated on the submission/ranking E-mail message to the NIH Awards Coordinator.
Total IC Nominations	Enter the total number of IC nominations. NOTE: Each group award counts as <u>one</u> nomination, despite how many people may be part of the group.
Nominator	Enter the name of the person who nominated this employee. At NIH, this is usually the IC Director.
Nominator Relationship	Enter the relationship of the nominator to the nominee, not the nominator's official title. At NIH, this is usually the IC Director.

Nominator IC	Enter the acronym for the nominator's IC, not necessarily the same as the nominee's IC.
Citation	Type in the citation. Start each citation with: "For ..." or "In recognition of ...". The box is designed to approximate the lines on the plaque. Type each line and press Tab to move to the next line. Total number of characters is limited to 120. Depending on your wording, 120 characters may not fit if long words must move to the next line. Adjust the citation to fit the space.
Justification	Copy and paste the justification from your word processor or type it in. The box holds less than one page of single spaced text, 1" margins on top and both sides, 3" bottom margin, 12 characters per inch (use 12 pitch courier) (approximately 3300 characters). It is suggested that you type this in your word processor, verify size, font, spelling, grammar, etc., and then cut and paste it into this field. If it is too long, the extra text will be omitted when the final form is printed. The NIH Awards Coordinator <u>will not</u> edit it. The Awards Committee will review this exactly as you type it here .
Check the most recent on-line copy of the <i>Handbook</i> for assistance.	

- P The next screen allows you to Save, Edit, or Cancel the nomination. Click on your choice. **Save** takes you to the screen to add the individual members of the group. **Edit** allows you to revise the group information you just entered. **Cancel** rejects the nomination and returns you to the Coordinator menu.
- P After verifying that the group information you entered is correct and clicking on **Save**, you see the Award Group Member Input Form, where you add the individual members of the group. Click on "Add Group Member" and complete the fields for each member:

Last Name, First Name, MI	Self-explanatory. Verify the spelling. Use Lead Capital letters for the names.
Degree(s)	Enter the degree(s) the employee normally uses, such as PhD, MD, MPH, DrPH. <u>Omit</u> periods between the initials. This will be used on the plaque. Multiple degrees are permissible. VERIFY THE DEGREES.
Salutation	Press <Enter> to see the pop-up list or type in Dr, Mr, or Ms. The salutation will be used in the congratulatory letter to the employee.
Position/Title	Enter the nominee's official working title, such as Secretary, Procurement Analyst, Health Scientist Administrator, Chemist, Division Director, etc.
Address	Use the 4 lines to enter the nominee's organizational location, i.e., Division of IC Consulting, OHRM 31 Center Drive, MSC-2272 Office of the Director, NIH Tab to move to the next line. (It is not necessary to use all 4 lines.)

- P Enter the information about the first group member and choose one of the following options: **Accept Input** adds the name to the database and returns you to the above screen to add group members. **Reset** clears the information from the fields. **Cancel Update** clears the information and exits you to the Award Group Member Input Form.
- P On the Member Input Form, chose **Add** or **Exit** as appropriate. **Add** provides the screen to input information about a member. **Exit** returns you to the Coordinator main menu.

! View/Edit a Nomination

Choose this option to review or edit a nomination which you have already entered via the New Individual or New Group menus.

- P Indicate whether you wish to review individual or group nominations and you will see a list of your nominations. Follow the instructions on the screen to identify and open the desired nomination. The entry screen is the same one used for the original nomination.
- P If you wish to print the nomination, use the "Print" option in your browser (i.e, Netscape or other browser).
- P When you are finished reviewing your nominations, click on "main menu" in the 'bread trail' at the top of your screen to return to the Award System Main Menu.

You may now close or minimize it. At the main menu level, you must log in again if you wish to re-enter the Awards system.

THE COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AWARDS PROGRAM

Purpose

The purpose of the commissioned officers' (CO) Awards Program is to recognize those COs whose outstanding performance and accomplishments merit recognition. The awards system is not intended to have officers compete against each other. **There are neither minimum nor maximum numbers of nominations of awards.**

Overview of the Nomination and Review Process

Nominations for a CO award are submitted to the NIH CO Awards Coordinator in the Division of Senior Systems (DSS), Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM), at NIH. It is the responsibility of the ICs to complete their internal nomination and review procedures in a timeframe to allow submission of the nominations by the due date. Generally, the process is as follows:

Submission Deadlines: Nominations for CO awards are due by May 8th and August 29th each year, or the next working day if either date falls on a weekend or holiday.

1. ICs complete their own internal nomination and review process to allow timely preparation of nominations.
2. By the deadline date, the IC Awards Coordinators and/or IC Personnel Offices submit the original and 8 of copies of each nomination to the NIH CO Awards Coordinator, in the Division of Senior Systems, OHRM (Bldg 31, Room B3-C12).
3. After submission by the ICs, the NIH CO Awards Coordinator will review the nominations and forward them to the CO Awards Board.
4. The NIH CO Awards Coordinator will inform the ICs of the decisions regarding the approved CO nominations that will be forwarded.
5. The Department Awards Board reviews the nominations and provides feedback to the NIH CO Awards Coordinator regarding who will receive an award.
6. The NIH CO Awards Coordinator informs the ICs of the Board's decision.

NIH Contact

The NIH CO Awards Coordinator is located in the Division of Senior Systems (DSS), Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM), in the Office of the Director (OD) at NIH. Questions or problems should be addressed to the NIH CO Awards Coordinator.

Timeframe Covered by the Award

Each recommendation for an individual or unit honor award should be formally initiated within thirteen (13) months after the noteworthy accomplishment or specific period of service to be recognized. No officer

may receive two individual honor awards in one award cycle year (July 1 through June 30) from their assigned agency except in extraordinary circumstances or for valor.

Eligibility

The CO Awards Program is open to all commissioned officers, regular and reserve corps on active duty. Officers in the inactive reserves and retired officers may receive awards for significant accomplishments and performance which occurred while on active duty. See the information specific to each award below.

Criteria for Nomination

Awards must be based on actions and activities that have not been the basis for a prior Commissioned Corps award, except what has been previously honored may serve as part of the basis for a more senior subsequent award that is based on significantly more actions and accomplishments over a longer period of time. There are no criteria for the number of awards or percent of officers receiving awards. In addition, see the criteria for each award listed below.

Types of Awards

There are two main type of awards: Honor Awards and Service Awards.

Honor Awards: There are eight individual and two unit honor awards.

- **Distinguished Service Medal (DSM):** The DSM is the highest award bestowed on an officer. It recognizes exceedingly high level of achievements, which may range from the management of a major health program to an initiative resulting in a major impact on the health of the nation. The award can also be awarded for a one-time heroic act resulting in great saving of life, health, or property.
- **Meritorious Service Medal (MSM):** The MSM recognizes meritorious service on the basis of a single, particularly important achievement; a career notable for accomplishments in technical or professional fields; or unusually high quality and initiative in leadership. The level of performance meriting this award may include a highly significant achievement in research, program direction, or program administration; a series of significant contributions; a continuing period of meritorious service; or exhibition of great courage in hazardous work, or in an emergency.
- **Outstanding Service Medal (OSM):** The OSM is presented to officers who have either demonstrated outstanding continuous leadership in carrying out the mission of the PHS or have performed a single accomplishment which has had a major effect on the health of the nation, or have performed a heroic act resulting in the preservation of health or property.
- **Commendation Medal (CM):** The CM is awarded to an officer who has demonstrated a level of proficiency and dedication distinctly greater than that expected of an average commissioned officer. The CM recognizes sustained high quality work performance in scientific, administrative, or other professional fields; application of unique skill or creative imagination to the approach or solution of problems; or noteworthy technical and professional contributions that are significant to a limited area.

- **Achievement Medal (AM):** The AM recognizes noteworthy contributions towards the attainment of program objectives, or sustained above-average performance over a relatively short period of time, such as a short tour of duty (120 days or less).
- **PHS Citation (PHS CIT):** The PHS CIT recognizes special contributions towards the attainment of program objectives, sustained above average performance of duty, or high quality performance of duty over a relatively short period of time.
- **Outstanding Unit Citation (OUC):** The OUC is awarded to commissioned officers who constitute a group which exhibited exceptional service of national or international significance. The award is usually given for specific actions over a relatively short period of time, marked by discrete beginning and ending dates.
- **Unit Commendation (UC):** The UC is presented to acknowledge outstanding accomplishment by a designated organizational unit within PHS. The award is made to commissioned officers who have demonstrated a significant level of performance well above that normally expected, but at a somewhat lesser level than is required for the OUC.

Service Awards: Service awards may be initiated by the officer or supervisor at any time after the criteria for the award have been met. There are five service awards and one campaign award.

- **Foreign Duty Award (FDA):** For service outside the US for 30 consecutive or 90 non-consecutive days in a foreign duty post (not in training status).
- **Hazardous Duty Award (HDA):** For service of over 180 days in a position requiring frequent risk to officer's safety. Assignments where the officer's professional knowledge should significantly reduce or abolish the risk do not qualify for the HDA. See CCPM27.1, Instruction 2, for the designated sites.
- **Isolated Hardship Award (ISOHAR):** For service of over 180 days at a site designated as isolated, remote, insular, or constituting a hardship. There are designated sites for the ISOHAR; see CCPM27.1, Instruction 2.
- **National Emergency Preparedness Award (NEPA):** For two continuous years of service in an organized unit that is mandated to provide emergency medical/support services and meet required activities, training, and certification.
- **Special Assignment Award (SAA):** For service of a minimum of 30 consecutive days in a detail to a specific program initiative of other Federal or State Agency.
- **Smallpox Eradication Campaign Ribbon (SPEC):** For 90 days service between January 1, 1966, and October 26, 1977, in the smallpox campaign.
- **Crisis Response Service Award (CRSA):** For service in PHS intervention activity in a crisis situation. Service must be direct/on-site, participation of a non-routine nature.

Nature, Level of Approval, and Presentation of the Award

Each CO awardee receives a ribbon. Presentation of awards is at either the annual NIH Awards Ceremony or at IC Awards Ceremony, depending on the approving authority. See the table below.

Award	Recommended By:	Reviewed By:	Approved By:	Presented By:
DSM	NIH Awards Board	CC Awards Board	Director, PSC	NIH Director or Surgeon General
MSM	NIH Awards Board	CC Awards Board	Director, PSC	NIH Director
OSM	NIH Awards Board	CC Awards Board	Director, PSC	NIH Director
CM	Supervisor	IC Director	NIH Director	IC Director
AM	Supervisor	IC Awards Committee	IC Director	IC Director
PHS CIT	Supervisor	IC Awards Committee	IC Director	IC Director
OUC	NIH Awards Board	CC Awards Board	Director, PSC	NIH Director
UC	Supervisor	IC Director	NIH Director	IC Director

Citation Guidelines

The citation is limited to 25 words maximum; all words are counted. Begin the citation with "For" Be consistent between the proposed citation and the narrative. Avoid overly technical language. Do not use abbreviations unless spelled out previously in the citation.

Justification Guidelines

In addition to the following guidelines, refer to the PHS Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual, CC 27.1, Instructions 1-4, for additional guidance.

- The period for which the honor nomination is proposed must be compatible with the period for which actions are cited.
- Remain within the maximum page limitations:
 - " 2 pages for DSM, MS, OSM, OUC
 - " 1 page for CM, UC
- Keep the text simple. Do not over complicate it nor use a lot of technical jargon. Avoid using glowing adjectives or global phrases unrelated to the accomplishment; let the accomplishment speak for itself.
- Avoid overly technical language. Do not assume that the reviewers will be familiar with in-house technical terms. Do not use abbreviations unless they are spelled out earlier in the narrative.
- Write the narrative first, then decide on the level of award. (Many nominators reverse this process.)
- Start the narrative with the nominee's present position and responsibilities, then go on to his/her accomplishments.
- Write in a specific and objective manner, answering the following questions:

- " What did the officer do to warrant recognition?
 - " What is the officer's scope of responsibility relative to his/her grade?
 - " What were the outcomes (impacts) of the officer's accomplishments on the program and the PHS in general?
 - " What was the scope of the outcome versus the officer's scope in his/her job?
 - " How did this accomplishment bring honor upon the officer and the PHS?
- **Important:** If previous awards overlap the period of the proposed award (such as for an award based on a career), "weave" the previous honor awards received into the text of the nomination by stating when the award was given and the reason it was given. Board members need this information to fully consider the proposed award.
 - Be consistent between the proposed citation on the cover sheet and the narrative. If the award is for a career, the narrative should encapsulate and summarize a career of accomplishments rather than one particular accomplishment. If the proposed award is to recognize a more focused number of accomplishment, the narrative should concentrate on them.
 - Write the narrative geared for the highest level of reviewing authority. Keep it simple, yet comprehensive. A neutral party should be able to read the narrative and based on it alone, understand the reason for the proposed award and agree or disagree without looking at any other document.
 - Do not include a *curriculum vitae*, COER, or list of publications.

Assembly and Submission of the Nomination Package

- Complete the cover sheet, including Grade, Category, and correct 5-digit PHS number. After the Officer's full name, indicate their doctoral degree in parentheses (MD, PhD), if applicable. Copies of the cover sheet/official nomination form (form PHS 6342-1 for unit nominations; form PHS 6342-2 for individual nominations) are available from the IC Awards Coordinators. Electronic copies in Adobe Acrobat (pdf) format are also available from the IC Awards Coordinator. (This allows you to print a clean original.)
- Type Agency Head signature block on each form.
- Attach the 1 or 2-page narrative justification.
- Submit an **original and 8 copies** to the NIH CO Awards Coordinator in DSS for both the PHS and NIH approved awards by c.o.b. on the deadline date.